

# New Prospect Baptist Church

*Shelby, North Carolina*



**1892-1953**



**1953-1983**



**1983-Present**

**150 Years of History  
1854 - 2004**



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*Shelby, NC*



**150 Years of History**  
**1854 - 2004**





*Preface.....*

*As chairman of the Sesquicentennial Committee for New Prospect, I assumed the responsibility of doing the research and pulling together the obtained information into these fifty-two "History Moments" that have been a part of our worship services for the duration of our anniversary year. In response to requests for copies of the articles, they are herein presented to you for your reading pleasure.*

*My sources were varied: Deeds and tax records for New Prospect Baptist Church on file at the Cleveland County Register of Deeds office, Minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association, Shelby Daily Star Newspaper articles stored on microfilm at the Cleveland County Memorial Library, A Romance of Preaching by Helen Alexander Dixon, Minutes of the Deacons' meetings of New Prospect Baptist Church, Minutes of the business sessions of New Prospect Baptist Church, information supplied by former church staff members, documents filed in our church office, church directories, and personal memories of current and former church members shared with me.*

*The process of writing these articles has given me a deeper appreciation of the great heritage we have at New Prospect. The Faith of our Fathers led them to establish this House of Worship. That faith has been challenged, tested, endured and strengthened over these one hundred and fifty years, and it has never failed us. As you read these pages and reflect on our past, I implore you to also engage in New Prospect's history in a personal way. What has been your personal role in the history of New Prospect? Then putting the past in its proper place, look to the future. What will be your role in the future of New Prospect?. May each of us assume the role that God has planned for us. Only in that way will His Church on New Prospect Hill be all that He wants it to be.*

*Shirley B. Hord, Editor  
October 3, 2004*



## *Pastoral Perspective*

In a day when time honored biblical values are being threatened and stability in the family and the workplace seems to be a thing of the past, any anniversary is a milestone. Certainly a sesquicentennial is a means for celebration, reflection, and hope. I recently heard a horrible report that a staggering number of churches in America close their doors each week. I praise the Lord for the strength, protection, and vision that He has given to New Prospect to stand the test of time. Although we have never been considered a mega-church with programs and buildings galore, we have been faithful in preaching the word, caring for the community of faith, seeking to build bridges to the community around us, and most importantly, desiring to know God.

Jesus said that He would build His church and the “gates of Hell would not prevail against it.” We know that any time we seek to do the things mentioned above that there will be difficulty. Doing good deeds is sometimes met with opposition and frustration. New Prospect has not been free from difficulties in its ministry and has faced many challenges within and without its walls. However, God has always raised up a group of people to pray and carry on the work. All in all it has been the hand of Almighty God who has kept this church family and its building as a “city on a hill which could not be hidden.”

With all of that in mind, let us not get so bogged down in the past that we forget that God has also called us to a work for today and to leave a legacy for those who come behind us. If the vision of the church one hundred years ago had been “lets just show up next Sunday”, we probably would not be celebrating here today. We must move beyond the status quo and our fears and frustrations to continue to serve our risen Lord. After any organization has been around a few years it is tempted to settle down and live off of memories and past successes. Yet the church must move ahead and meet the challenges of a new era in order to be alive for the next generation. We are always only one generation away from the extinction of Christianity.

I believe the sacrifices and successes, the struggles and the joys of the past one hundred fifty years serve as a motivating catalyst to equip us with the vision and discipline to do something new in the coming years. If the Lord tarries His coming and New Prospect stands another one hundred fifty years, may those celebrating that occasion say of us that we too were faithful. In the words of a recent song:

*“May all who come behind us find us faithful.  
May the fire of our devotion light their way.  
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe,  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.”*

So may it be,

Rev. Timothy Tapp





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**October 5, 2003**

**Welcome to the beginning of the 150<sup>th</sup> year for New Prospect Baptist Church. One of the ways we agreed to celebrate this important anniversary in the life of our church was to have a history moment as a part of our Sunday morning worship services for the entire 52 weeks of our 150th year. That begins today and will continue until the climax of our celebration on Oct 3, 2004.**

**Today I want to share with you a page from the writings of Charlotte S. Beam that was published in 1983 and is found in the genealogy room of our county's public library. The booklet compiled for the Benjamin Cleveland Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is entitled JOHN TEETER BEAM, REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT AND DESCENDANTS.**

**This particular page is titled: JOHN TEETER BEAM PROPERTY MEMORANDUM.**

**From August 1949 through November 1963, Ralph Webb Gardner, a great, great, great grandson of John Teeter Beam, purchased, for his Gardner Aberdeen-Angus cattle farm, practically all of the original tract which John Teeter Beam purchased from William Killian in 1794.**

**This land owned in 1968 by Ralph Webb Gardner is on both sides of Buffalo Creek in Cleveland County and completely surrounds the land on which New Prospect Church is located and which was first built in 1801 as a small log house of worship on the hill where the new church now stands. It was built by John Teeter Beam and was his own denomination, Lutheran. Some of John Teeter Beam's children married Baptist and in 1820 he gave the New Prospect Church building to the Baptist denomination; however, he retained title to the land.**

**This building was remodeled and changed from a log building to a one-room frame building. On October 6, 1854, New Prospect was formally organized as a Baptist Church. Reverend Thomas Dixon, who served as pastor for 55 years, was the leading figure in having the church charted as a Baptist Church.**



**In 1892 Columbus C. Beam, grandson of John Teeter Beam donated the land for the building of a new church, and he was the contractor that also built the church. The bricks were made from clay uncovered on the pastureland now owned by Ralph W. Gardner.**

**In 1952 New Prospect Church was remodeled again. The old church was brick veneered and a new vestibule built at the front entrance and an educational building was added to the auditorium.**

**Oct. 12, 2003**

**Today for our history moment, I want to share with you the report made following a survey of the New Prospect Church cemetery on April 21, 1939.**

**The report states and I quote: "New Prospect Church Cemetery is situated in Cleveland County, N.C., township #5 on the road leading from Shelby to Lincolnton, about 200 yards north of Buffalo Creek and is about 8 miles north of Shelby.**

**This church has a large and interesting cemetery. It is well kept. It is here where the body of venerable Rev. Tom Dixon lies, also his wife Amanda E. Dixon, parents of Rev. Clarence Dixon, one time pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle of London, England, Tom Dixon, Jr. author, lecturer and playwright, Dr. Delia Dixon Carroll and Addie Dixon Thacker. Their marker stands directly in front of the church, but the tallest marker is the one of John Teeter Beam born in Germany in 1732, which was 227 years after the death of Martin Luther, the German Reformer. I mention this because of the fact that in this site where the body of John Teeter Beam lies, he had erected a Lutheran church, which building was used by other denominations. There being but few German Lutheran settlers in said community, the church finally gave way to the Baptist faith who were most numerous. Hence the organization of New Prospect Baptist Church in 1854.**

**On this date in 1939, the cemetery contains approximately 370 graves. Marked graves number 245. Unmarked graves number 125. The earliest marked grave is Samuel Conner's dated 1793.**

**The last sentence of the lengthy inscription on the grave marker of John Teeter Beam states, "In a pioneer life of 75 years, he met every expectation of man."**





**October 19, 2003**

**Today, for our “History Moment,” we bring you information from the minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association, at its 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting convened at Mount Sinai Church on Friday, October 20, 1854.**

**“After a short recess, the delegates convened in the House, and prayer was offered by Elder J. Suttle. The churches were then called, their correspondences read, the names of their delegates enrolled, and the state of each church minuted. On motion, opened a door for the reception of churches into our Union and received the following: Sandy Plains, constituted 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1854; New Prospect, constituted October 6, 1854; and Bethlehem and Long Creek, dismissed from the Broad River Association. ....On motion, appointed Elder T. Dickson and Major Hull S. McBrayer the Moderator and Clerk.....On motion, the committee on Union Meetings reported as follows: First Union Meeting to be held at New Prospect commencing on Friday before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May next.**

**The Statistics of these minutes show that along with our pastor, Rev. Tom Dickson, our church’s delegates to this meeting were A. Beam and J. Hoyle. We showed a membership of 85 and contributed \$1.50 of the total association contributions of \$33.82 coming from the 22 member churches.**

**It is interesting to note that on the day we joined the association, we also opened the doors of our church for the next meeting of the Union.**

**October 26, 2003**

**On this date in 1856, the Kings Mountain Baptist Association was in the third day of its annual meeting. It was a Sunday, just like today. The meeting had begun on Friday, October 24, 1856 and New Prospect was the host church. Elder T. Dickson had delivered the introductory sermon on Friday. His text was from the First epistle of Peter, Chapter 2, and verse 5. Following the sermon, there was a short intermission and then the Association proceeded to business. Elder T. Dickson was elected moderator and Brother J. R. Logan, clerk.**



**On the second day of the meeting, The moderator announced the membership of the various committees and then gave them time to meet and conduct their duties. The deacons of New Prospect, along with Brethren J.O. Lattimore, R. McBrayer and B. Goforth were to serve on the "Preaching during the Session Committee"**

**Later they reconvened to present their varied reports to the entire assembly of delegates. Before the meeting ended on Monday afternoon, a resolution was passed that the thanks of the house be unanimously voted to the brethren and citizens in the vicinity of New Prospect Church for their kind hospitality toward the Association during this session.**

**It should be noted that hospitality in those days carried the full extent of the meaning of the word. Church members' homes were opened to association delegates whose homes were distant enough from the meeting place that going back and forth each day would have been impossible when a horse drawn buggy was the only means of transportation.**

**The statistical report of the association showed T. Dickson to be pastor of New Prospect, J.C. Hoyle, the clerk, and delegates to the association were J.C. Hoyle, A. Beam, and J. Wilson. During that year we had 2 baptisms, 8 had been received by letter, 2 members had been excluded and 1 had died. Our total membership was 103, and we contributed \$1.50 of the total of \$37.16 that was given by the 29 churches that were now members of the growing Kings Mountain Baptist Association.**

**Nov. 2, 2003**

**From the statistical records of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association for the year 1860, we find T. Dickson listed as pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church, J. C. Hoyle- clerk, and the delegates to the association were J.C. Hoyle, J.L. Ledford, V.H. Elliott, and W. Alexander. There had been 27 baptisms during the year and our contribution to the association was \$2.00.**

**In 1861, we did not have a pastor listed, but our clerk and delegates had attended the association meeting. The statistics revealed our membership to be 151 and our contribution to the association was \$2.55.**





From 1862 through 1864 there was no listing for New Prospect Baptist Church in the minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association. However there is record of Rev. Thomas Dixon taking his family to Arkansas for those years in some secular records found in the genealogy room of our public library. It says and I quote, "The ministries of Rev. Thomas Dixon went well until the advent of the War Between the States. Then suddenly in the spring of 1861, he put his wife, two children, and 32 slaves into a calvacade of wagons and headed west to seek a place he felt would be safe from the impending war." Further down in that same article we read, "There is very little in the records of the churches that indicates that a war had broken out between the sections of the country. The only evidence is the recording of a larger number of funerals and the reference to a large attentive congregation which gathered to hear Rev. Thomas Dixon in 1864 as he led the church in its first protracted meeting since the beginning of the war."

Nov. 9, 2003

Following the Civil War, New Prospect did not appear in the list of churches of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association until 1872. At that time, T. Dixon was pastor, J.C. Hoyle was clerk, and we had a total of 272 members. Our contributions to the association were \$2.00 for the printing of the minutes and \$8.10 for state missions.

Our membership continued to grow to 316 in 1875, and the name of Elphus Hamrick was listed with the delegates from previous years on the statistical report. In 1877, we had 47 baptisms, and Jesse Hord was added to the delegates. The 23 baptisms of 1878 when J.P. Styers was listed as pastor brought the New Prospect membership to 358. That year our association delegates were: T. Dixon, J.P. Styers, J.L. Ledford, J.C. Hoyle, A. Beam, E. Hamrick, E. Hendrick and Billy Eskridge. T. Dixon was shown as pastor for New Prospect again in 1879, and J.P. Styers was still listed as one of our delegates to the association. There was a decline in membership to 282. Our contributions were \$1.80 for the minutes and \$5.25 for state missions.



Nov. 16,2003

Since Rev. Thomas Dixon seems to have been so instrumental in the early years of New Prospect Baptist Church, we want to begin today sharing with you some biographical information. This will continue during our "History Moments" for several weeks as his life and the life of New Prospect are intertwined. The details were gleaned from a biography of his son, Amzi Clarence Dixon and authored by his son's wife, Helen Alexander Dixon. Even though she was telling the story of her husband, to do that she included much about his early life, his parents and the churches he grew up in. I now quote from her book, A Romance of Preaching.

"Thomas Dixon, the eldest son of David and Suzannah Hambright Dixon, was robbed of educational advantages due to the loss of the family fortune and the premature death of his father. However, that developed in him originality, a dependence upon the Scriptures, and a life long craving for learning.

Converted in early boyhood, Thomas soon showed an aptitude for preaching the Gospel.....While working strenuously on the farm to support his Mother and three younger siblings, the impulse to preach burned more and more brightly in his soul, and he gave all his spare time to preaching.

He was ordained at the age of 23 and became the pastor of a church in the woods near Catawba Creek. At the age of 28, he married Amanda McAfee. At that time, he was pastor of four churches. Such devotion to his calling involved self-sacrifice for preaching was largely a voluntary service. The preacher much needs support himself and his family by other means. So just before his marriage, he had purchased a large frame house on the south side of the central square in Shelby. The house had an adjoining general store, which was to be the means of financing what he considered the real work of his life – preaching.

For more that 40 years Thomas Dixon served as pastor of Buffalo Baptist Church just south of the state borderline. Of all the churches he served, there was only one other that rivaled Buffalo in his affection and in length of service. That was New Prospect where he preached for 55 years."



Nov. 23, 2003

Today we continue with the biography of Thomas Dixon.

“ In 1860, before the actual outbreak of the Civil War, Thomas Dixon suddenly decided to migrate westwards to Little Rock, Arkansas...It was quite a cavalcade that set out from Shelby, for the Dixon took with them 32 faithful slaves that wife Amanda had inherited....The household goods and provisions were piled into covered wagons..The strain of parting from their loved ones was keenly felt by Amanda, but it was with a brave spirit that she accompanied her husband upon this great adventure....At last Little Rock was reached, and they were settled into their primitive western home by the time Abraham Lincoln became President.

War broke out on April 12, 1861, and for awhile the little settlement in Arkansas seemed far removed from the actualities of war. By June of 1863, the Arkansas settlers began to realize the danger of their isolated position when word came that a General Steele had been ordered to take up quarters in Little Rock.

It was clearly impossible for the Dixons to remain there with their slaves. Yet how could they find their way back to Shelby and evade the Northern troops? Only the courage of desperation could have given them the determination to set out upon such a journey at such a time. With their goods packed once more into covered wagons, Thomas and Amanda started on their homeward trail with their son Clarence and their company of colored servants.....Their journey was very dangerous. As they completed the last stretch and arrived in Shelby, they realized they had covered between 8 and 9 hundred miles and had taken 3 ½ months to get back home.

In spite of all the changes that had taken place in the war torn South, Thomas resumed his work as pastor of the churches at Buffalo and New Prospect as though he had never left them.”

November 30, 2003

For our History Moment we are again quoting from Helen Alexander Dixon's book.

“The story of the constitution of New Prospect illustrates the way in which many churches came into being. About 8 miles to the northeast of Shelby, near Buffalo Creek, was a hill thickly wooded with





**oak and hickory. Here the farmers of the locality had established their cemetery, and had built a log house in which to hold funeral services. A prominent member of the community died, and it was evident that the little log house could not hold the people who would attend the funeral. Roughly hewn boards were hurried from a neighboring sawmill, and benches were made and placed in the grove. To give better protection from the blazing sun, the benches were flanked by rows of forked posts about seven feet high, cross-poles being laid in the forks to form a roof. This framework was covered with boughs of trees in full leaf, making a "bush arbor" which provided cool, refreshing shade. Almost everyone in the community attended the funeral. Thomas Dixon was the preacher, and the people were much moved by his sermon. Sensing the impression made, he announced a service for the following day. The meeting was protracted for two weeks, at the end of which there were more than 40 converts. These were baptized in the near-by stream and were included in a charter membership of 85 persons who organized the new church.**

**Dec. 7, 2003**

**From pages 37 and 38 of the book A Romance of Preaching, we read these words:**

**"It was during that summer of 1873, between his junior and senior years at Wake Forest, that an event occurred which changed the whole course of Clarence's life. One day he was sent by his father to New Prospect church to notify the people that the pastor could not keep his appointment to preach to them because he was in the midst of a revival in another church.**

**When he rode up the hill on horseback, Clarence found a group of men standing under the trees in front of the meeting house. He gave them his father's message, and was about to turn and ride home again when one of the deacons approached and, touching him on the knee, said, "My young brother, will you not come in and lead the meeting for us? It is a pity to let these people go home without a religious service." Clarence had frequently accompanied his father on preaching tours, but had never actually led any of the meetings. He was only 19, and was embarrassed by the sense of inexperience, but he was ashamed to refuse, and so consented to do his best.**



It was a very informal service. A chapter was read, some familiar hymns were sung, and the deacons led in prayer. Clarence evidently gave an earnest message, and the Spirit of God worked mightily among the people for some were deeply convicted of sin, and the deacons besought him to return on the following day.

For two weeks he rode out daily to New Prospect, reading the Scriptures and pleading with the people to turn from sin to Christ. On the last day of the meetings his father accompanied him and baptized the many converts. When the baptismal service was over, Thomas Dixon turned to the crowded congregation and said, "I thank God that He has called one of my sons into the Gospel ministry" This was the first hint Clarence had about such a call on his life, but from that time on his conviction was clear. His studies had been planned with a legal career in view, but now he knew that he was called to preach. He often said that it was the touch of the old farmer's hand on his knee that turned the current of his life from the law to the Gospel."

Dec. 14, 2003

The life story of Amzi Clarence Dixon continued for years and covered many printed pages before New Prospect was mentioned again. Almost 30 years later he would be back to attend the funeral of his mother. Listen to the account of that event in his life:

---"Throughout these years, A. C. Dixon had not lost contact with the South, although the personal links were snapping, one by one. At the end of April, 1902, news reached him of the sudden death of his mother at Shelby after a few days' illness.

"Father was crushed when he knew she was gone," he wrote, but it is beautiful to see how the promises and hopes he has preached to others for 60 years comfort and sustain him now. I am glad he seems eager to keep on with his work."

When they laid his mother's body to rest on the beautiful hill where stand the New Prospect Church, his mind ran back to that day long ago when he had ridden up that hill with his father's message, and on that very spot had been induced by the old deacon to stay and preach his first sermon.

To a friend he wrote, "Since those days I have been separated many miles from the plain country people who wept over sin with me, and then rejoiced with me in salvation. But we have not gone apart in





**the faith that meets the deep needs of the soul. When the friends of my childhood wept with me again as they strewed flowers upon my mother's grave, I felt as never before that we had experiences in common which neither life nor death will ever change."**

**Dec. 21, 2003**

**Thomas Dixon continued his preaching ministry after the death of his beloved wife. By 1909, his son Clarence had accepted the pastorate of the Moody Church in Chicago. He invited his 89-year-old father to come to give his Chicago congregation his testimony of a lifetime's experience in the service of a faithful God. Thomas wrote back to his son, "I am well and am preaching to four churches. I love to preach the old Gospel of Christ, and I would like to come and see you all, but Chicago is so far. I do not think I can venture on such a long trip."**

**On Easter Sunday, 1909, A.C. Dixon received a sudden summons to his sister's home in Raleigh, where his father had taken ill. He found the old man eager to return to preaching and impatient of the necessary restraint. Only the promise that Clarence would return and spend the month of July preaching with him in the country churches of Cleveland County could pacify him. When father and sister sat together in the First Baptist Church of Raleigh, listening to A.C. Dixon's uplifting message on "heaven" the old veteran's face was aglow. It proved to be the last service he ever attended. He appeared to be doing well and A.C. returned to Chicago only to be recalled a few days later for his father's funeral.**

**At early dawn on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, A.C. Dixon with his two brothers and two sisters, united for the first time in many years, left Raleigh for Shelby with their father's body. In the midst of an immense crowd of country people, they laid it to rest beside Amanda's on the hill by the church which Thomas Dixon had founded and to which he had ministered for more than half a century.**

**Following the funeral, A. C. Dixon wrote, "New Prospect is one of the most beautiful spots I ever saw. Only a day's notice of the funeral had been given, but the great grove at the church was full of buggies and horses, and the church could not hold half of the people. It broke my heart to see their devotion, white and colored. When the crowd of white people had passed in single file before the casket, the Negroes,**



who had requested the same privilege, came in from the churchyard. Mother's and Father's graves were covered with flowers."

Dec. 28, 2003

Up until now the information for our "History Moment" each week has been about the people and statistics from the early years of our church. Today I would like for you to jump forward to 1964 with me as we look at our treasurer's report for December and notice the bulletin announcements.

During the month we received \$901.68 in offerings and added it to the amount of \$1,019.20 that we carried over from the previous month making a total available of \$1920.88. From that we paid the pastor's salary of \$418.74, the Chorister's salary of \$65.00, the sexton's salary of \$35.00, a power bill of \$14.34, church supplies amounting to \$58.87, and the fuel payment of \$35.00. We also paid \$21.64 for installing a phone and the whopping sum of \$105.00 for lumber and labor for the study. We had purchased Christmas treats totaling \$14.76. In the missions category of our spending there was a contribution to the Kings Mountain Association of \$12.50, Co-operative Program- \$35.42, and the Lottie Moon Offering was \$219.38 there were a few other incidentals making our expenses for December, 1964 total \$1,121.88.

Mrs. O. M. Greene had placed flowers in the sanctuary that day. The meetings scheduled for that Wednesday were a Sunday School worker's council, the G.A.'s, and both Adult and Youth Choir rehearsals. We were encouraged to represent our church with a good number attending the Evangelism Clinic at Eastside Church on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January.

Jan. 4, 2004

Today for our church's history moment we will be sharing with you the wording from New Prospect's oldest deed recorded with the Cleveland County Register of Deeds Office. It is hand written and was rather difficult to read, but we think this is what it says:

"This indenture made on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August A.D. one thousand, eight hundred, and fifty-five between J. Beam of the County of Cleveland and State of North Carolina on the one part and Andrew



Beam, and J. C. Hoyle and J. F. Willson and N. H. Elliott, trustees and deacons of the County of Cleveland and state above named Religious Society of New Prospect on the one part.

Witnesseth that for and consideration of the sum of one dollar to him in hand paid the receipt whereby is hereby fully acknowledged by this said J. Beam hath given, granted, bargained, and sold and by them present doth give, grant, bargain, and sell unto the said A. Beam, J. C. Hoyle, J. F. Willson, and N. H. Elliott, trustees and deacons of aforesaid and their successors in office a certain tract or parcel of land lying and being in the state of North Carolina in the county of Cleveland on the waters of Buffalo Creek. Bounded as follows: Beginning at a red oak then easterlly 27 poles to a red oak, thence northerlly 21 poles to a red oak saplin, thence westerlly 24 poles to a white oak, then southerdly 18 poles to the beginning. Containing by estimate three acres be the same more or less. To have and to hold together with all and singular the work ways and liberty of going to and from the nearest springs to get using water while preaching at New Prospect Church. Privilege is for aforementioned, those unto belonging or in any wise of pertaining to them the said A. Beam, J. C. Hoyle, J. F. Willson, and N. H. Elliott, trustees of the Baptist Society of New Prospect as aforesaid and their successors in office in fee simple absolutely and forever free and discharged of any and all incumbrances whatsoever in trust and for the use and benefit of the said Baptist Religious Society of New Prospect Church so long as the church is kept up. If the house should shut down and it cease to be a church, it is to return back to J. Beam or his heirs, On the above condition I warrant the said land to the trustees and deacons A. Beam, J. C. Hoyle, J. F. Willson, and N. H. Elliott and their successors in office. In testimony whereof the said J. Beam hath hereunto set his hand and seal the date first above written."

This legal document was then signed Joshua Beam and witnessed by James Poston and M. A. Bridges.

On April 6, 1899 this deed was registered with the following notation:

"North Carolina, Cleveland County. Mrs. M. L. Lattimore being duly sworn says that James Poston, one of the subscribing witnesses to the foregoing instrument is dead and that M. A. Bridges, the other subscribing witness is either dead or his whereabouts unknown, and that she is well acquainted with the handwriting of Joshua Beam having





often seen him write and that his signature on it appears as granted, So the foregoing instrument is in his own proper handwriting, and that he is dead. Therefore, let this instrument with this certificate be registered this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April 1899.

Signed L.J. Hoyle, Clerk Superior Court

January 11, 2004

Last week you heard the reading of the very first deed to property granted to New Prospect Church. On file with the Register of Deeds Office of Cleveland County are currently a total of eight deeds. I will not read all of them word for word. Let me just give you the bare facts.

On July 26, 1902 C. C. Beam deeded one acre and five rods of land to New Prospect Baptist Church.

On August 2, 1952, six acres of land was deeded to us by Josh Beam. Notation on the deed explained that the six acres included all of the 3 ½ acres on which New Prospect Church is located and approximately 2 ½ acres surrounding the same.

On May 30, 1953 a deed from Josh Beam to New Prospect Church for ½ acre which included one fifth of one acre which had previously been deeded to New Prospect by C. C. Beam on July 26, 1902.

On November 3, 1956 1 ½ acres was deeded from Josh Beam to New Prospect Baptist Church. And a second deed of that same date for forty-eight, one hundredth of one acre from Harold B. Dellinger to New Prospect Baptist Church.

It would appear that these four deeds dated in the 1950's were brought about to be sure that the church had a clear title to the land without any restrictions before engaging in a major building project.

On June 9, 1978, Ralph W. Gardner deeded 1.1 acres of land to New Prospect to provide a perpetual easement for road purposes over this property.

Our most recently dated deed is January 17, 1990 when 20.8 acres, the wooded area between the church and the parsonage, was purchased from Robert F. Morgan by New Prospect Baptist Church.



**January 18, 2004**

**During the past two weeks our history moment has given you information about amounts of land deeded to New Prospect Baptist Church. We felt you might be interested in the value of our property and how that value grew through the years.**

**In 1897 all we owned was valued at \$1500.00.**

**In 1931 the value was \$5000.00, and \$5500.00 in 1947.**

**By the mid-fifties it was listed at \$45,000.00. Our same property had increased in value to \$95,000.00 in 1960, and \$115,000.00 in the 70's.**

**Tax records for the year 2003 show New Prospect Baptist Church to own a single family dwelling on an eighty-seven, one hundredth of an acre lot with a tax value of \$93,310.00. We also have listed a total of 28 acres of land valued at \$68,806.00, and our church building is listed at \$200,468.00. That adds up to \$362,584.00 as the total tax value of all buildings and land owned by New Prospect Baptist Church. Of course, the tax account is listed as fully exempt due to our religious nature.**

**January 25, 2004**

**E. Y. Webb wrote a History of the Kings Mountain Association's First Fifty Years – from 1851 through 1901. In it, he sheds light on the reason behind New Prospect, as well as a number of other churches, withdrawing from the association for several years in the 1860's.**

**It appears there was a very rigid resolution on temperance passed at the 1859 annual meeting. When the association convened the next year on October 26, 1860, they attempted to be sure of total compliance to the temperance resolution by each member church. Twelve churches of the 30 members of the Association were found to be lacking. Their letters were laid on the table, and their messengers were rejected. Out of the twelve, New Bethel, Mt. Vernon, and New Prospect showed a will and determination to carry out the resolution, and so they were indulged until the 1861 session when they withdrew their membership from the Kings Mountain Association.**

**The controversy continued until 1865 when a delegate from Zoar Baptist Church handed to the Body the following query: "Would it not be conducive to the interest of religion and the general cause of Christ within the bounds of the Kings Mountain Association, for said Body to labor with and take measures to restore harmony and fellowship with**



churches who probably by reason of an honest difference of opinion on the subject of temperance have seceded from the Body?"

Thus began the long process of reconciliation and restoration of member status to the twelve churches.

February 1, 2004

For our history moment today, we are giving you a roll call of the Pastors and their years of service at New Prospect Baptist Church.

Thomas Dixon 1854 to 1909 with the exception of 1878.

J.P. Styers 1878

C. T. Tew 1909

I. T. Newton 1910

I. D. Harrill 1911 to 1920

Rush Padgett 1921 and 1922

W. T. Brown 1923 and 1924

W. G. Camp 1925 to 1926

W. E. Lowe 1927 to 1932

J. B. Davis 1933 and 1934

B. P. Parks 1935 to 1942

A. M. Kiser 1942 to 1952

L. W. Smith 1953 to 1956

J. Edgar Bishop 1956 to 1961

William W. Willingham 1962 and 1963

Billy G. Washburn 1964 to 1966

Darrell Saunders 1967 and 1969

James F. Adams 1970 to 1975

M. T. Gales 1975 to 1981

Pressley Stutts 1982 to 1986

Arthur Collum 1987 to 1993

Chad Harvey 1994 to 1996

Larry Nance 1997 to 1999

Tim Tapp Our current pastor has been with us since  
December 24, 2000.

This is a total of 24 pastors during our entire 150 years.





**February 8, 2004.**

**There have been a number of Pastors whose length of service in the pulpit of New Prospect Baptist Church was five years or more. Beginning today, we will focus on one of them each week for a while. We will be sharing with you the status of the church under each one's leadership. Today we look at I. D. Harrill.**

**Rev. Harrill became pastor here in 1911 and served until 1920, a total of nine years. He received an annual salary from this church of \$125.00 for most of those years. It is interesting to note that he served on the Pastoral Support Committee of the Kings Mountain Association, and read their report at the 1913 annual meeting. He said, "Your committee recommends that we pay our pastors monthly so they can meet their obligations. We further recommend that our pastors be paid a living support."**

**His committee's report did not get him a raise. However, in 1917 his salary increased to \$175.00, and in 1920, his final year here, he was paid \$250.00. Total receipts that year were \$1,297.98.**

**While Rev. Harrill served as pastor, O. C. Dixon served as church clerk, and our membership ranged from 208 to 274.**

**J. B. Smith and E. C. Carpenter served as Sunday School Superintendents, and Sunday School membership ranged from 86 to 124 with attendance averaging 50.**

**The church property was valued at \$1500.00 during the entire span of Rev. Harrill's time with us. To place that time in proper perspective, remember that World War I was fought during this same period of time.**

**February 15, 2004**

**For our history moment today we are remembering the years from 1927 through 1932. Of course historically these were the years of the stock market crash and the beginning of the great depression. Here at New Prospect Baptist Church the flock was being attended by Rev. W. E. Lowe**

**Church membership remained stable while he was our pastor. We had 221 members when he came and 219 his final year. His highest number of baptisms was eleven in 1928.**



His salary started at \$400.00 annually and only increased to \$420.00 in his 4<sup>th</sup> year as our pastor. There was only one year in which the total receipts of the church were shown in the association's minutes. That was \$1,144.73 in 1929. The Church's property was valued at \$5000.00 during those years.

Three men served as Sunday School superintendent during those years: O. C. Dixon in 1927, Marvin L. Turner from 1928 through 1930, and Zeno Hord beginning in 1931. Sunday School membership reached 130 and average attendance was 67.

Prior to 1924, New Prospect only had preaching services during the third week-end of each month. Now services were held on the first and third week-ends monthly.

Our church would have been considered progressive for the time in that we had several single ladies in leadership positions while Rev. Lowe was our pastor. Miss Novella Cline served two years and Miss Vada Wright served one year as church treasurer, and Miss Pearl Dixon was church clerk one year.

February 22, 2004

B. P. Parks was pastor of New Prospect from 1935 until his death on May 24, 1942. He is the only pastor of record who was serving our church at the time he died. He was also pastor of Norman's Grove Baptist Church during the same time.

When Rev. Parks accepted our call, he was paid \$360.51 for his first year's work here. The total budget for that same year was \$1033.44.

We must have continued to be a very liberal, progressive congregation for that time period. For our church clerk, we elected an unmarried lady, Margaret Hord. She continued to serve in that position for a number of years.

Margaret's brother, Zeno Hord was Sunday School Superintendent during all of Rev. Parks' years here, and our average attendance grew to 109 during Rev. Park's ministry.

During Rev. Parks' time as our pastor, we find records of a second attempt to organize a Women's Missionary Union in New Prospect Baptist Church. Mrs. Leander Hamrick was the WMU President and 13 ladies were enrolled..



**February 29, 2004**

**Rev. A. M. Kiser is remembered lovingly by many of our older members. He was pastor for ten years beginning in 1942, and was shepherd of our flock throughout the time of World War II. During this time, he was also serving as pastor of Waco, Union, Big Springs, and Pleasant Grove Baptist Churches.**

**In 1946, he represented us at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis. In that same year and under his leadership, we bought two dozen hymnals, enlarged the deacon board to nine members, and undertook a building project to add an educational wing and a vestibule to the existing one room building.**

**In April, 1949, lights were added to the church, and in August of 1951 a well was dug at the church.**

**In 1952, Rev. Kiser saw the need to have a board of trustees for the church and led us to elect Paul Allen, E. G. Clark, and T. Z. Hord as the first trustees for the purpose of handling the deeds for the church property.**

**On January 1, 1953, Rev. Kiser left our church to accept the call of Fork Baptist Church. I will share with you now the resolution of respect for Rev. A. M. Kiser that was adopted by our church and mailed to his new church on January 9, 1953.**

**“At a special conference of our church it was unanimously approved to pay this tribute of love to our former pastor who so successfully led our church for the past ten years. We are not unmindful of the fact that if it had not been for his untiring efforts and earnest prayers during our building program we would not have been able to carry this through to a successful completion. We also feel that we owe his beloved companion a debt of gratitude that we shall never be able to pay for the fine and faithful service that she helped to render in our community as well as in our church.**

**We feel that the community as well as the church has lost a great Christian leader.**

**Brother Kiser was always interested in the young people and labored diligently with their different church organizations.**

**Brother and Mrs. Kiser’s sympathy, prayers, and presence during any sickness and death that occurred in the community shall never be forgotten, and we shall always covet their prayers.**

**We feel that God, in his all wise wisdom has inspired you, the people of Fork Baptist Church, to select this great Christian leader, and**





**it is our earnest prayer that his service and efforts will be as great a blessing to your church and community as he has been to ours.**

**Looking to heaven for divine guidance, may God's richest blessings rest upon your community and your beloved pastor, Rev. A. M. Kiser and family."**

**March 7, 2004**

**Rev. J. Edgar Bishop was called to New Prospect Baptist Church on March 4, 1956 as a full time pastor. During Rev. Bishop's first year with us, we took part in a school of missions, and had a ten-day revival.**

**Led by Rev. Bishop, the church voted in October of 1956 to buy a lot from Josh Beam and accept as a gift from Harold B. Dellinger a parcel of land at the back of the Beam lot to make a suitable track of land for building a parsonage.**

**By December, 1957, the parsonage was completed and Rev. Bishop, his beloved Gracie and their sons became its first residents.**

**When Rev. Bishop began his ministry here, J. L. Allen was volunteering his services to direct our music. In 1958 we expanded our ministry staff by hiring our first part time minister of music. That year we also began sponsoring, providing leadership, and a meeting place for a Boy Scout troop for the young boys in the church community.**

**Under Rev. Bishop's leadership our annual budget grew to \$7,922.00 and our Sunday School average attendance for his last year with us was 103.**

**Rev. Bishop died in 1988. The writer of his memorial tribute in the minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association said, "I have never known a person who manifested a more Christ-like attitude and spirit than Edgar Bishop." Members of our congregation who knew him probably agree.**

**March 14, 2004**

**Rev. James F. Adams, his musically talented, school-teacher wife Martha, and their sons Jay and Tommy moved into the New Prospect parsonage in 1970. He had been called as our pastor at an annual salary of \$6,180.00. When he resigned to accept another call in 1975 he was earning \$9,000.00.**



Harold Beam, our minister of music, worked well with Rev. Adams, and by 1972 responded to the call God was making on his life to enter the preaching ministry. When Harold left us to go to Fruitland to prepare himself, Martha Adams willingly filled the music position until our church called Doris Funk as music director.

Rev. Adams was a compassionate visitor to the elderly and sick of the church family. He was humble and soft-spoken, and while his sermons were not delivered with a forceful voice, they were deep in spiritual content.

Both Martha and Jim worked with the youth of our church and often took them on camping trips.

Evening services were discontinued in October of 1970 at the recommendation of the Deacons in an effort to place greater emphasis on improving the Training Union.

During Rev. Adams fifth and last year as our pastor, we averaged 90 in Sunday School, 30 in Training Union, and had a very active WMU program. Paul Hord served as church clerk, and our total membership was 202. Receipts that year were \$20,414.00 and \$2,519.00 was given to missions. That same year, we published our first church directory including a calendar of planned events for the entire year.

Through the years, the Adams have been invited back for special occasions many times. One such event was the Mother's Day banquet on May 7, 1983 when Jim was the guest speaker and Martha was the soloist. They have also been guests for senior citizen banquets and Memorial Days as well as funerals. To continue to be called back speaks highly of a former pastor.

March 21, 2004

Rev. M. T. Gales became our pastor in 1975 bringing with him to the parsonage his nurse wife, Nell, and teen-aged son Jake. During his six years with us, we had a number of different music directors: Steve Elmore, Mildred Sigmon, Rick Tucker, Lynn Hamrick, and Pat St. Charles. Musically gifted church member, Amanda Cline, willingly filled in between the hired staff members, several of whom were students at Gardner Webb College.

Under Rev. Gales' leadership physical improvements were made to the church and grounds. In 1977 the parking lot and drive around the church were black-topped at a cost of \$9,543.00.



In 1978, cushions were added to the pews, air-conditioning was installed in the Sunday School rooms, and hot water was made available in the ladies restroom.

In 1980, the Jordon Monument Company was engaged at a cost of \$2450.00 to repair 162 tomb stones in the church cemetery, and floor tiles were installed over the cement floors in all of the basement areas.

In 1981, following several break-ins at the church, a burglar alarm system was added.

During Rev. Gales' sixth and final year as our pastor, we had a membership of 197. Average attendance in Sunday School was 71 and in Training Union average attendance was 25. Total receipts were \$48,587.00, and \$6,914.00 was given to missions.

March 28, 2004

January of 1987 brought Rev. Arthur Collum and his wife Dolly to our church field. Their three children were already grown, so they came as a couple to our parsonage. He was called as full time pastor at an annual salary of \$21,661.00. On his first Sunday here, services had to be cancelled due to a big snow. That same month our furnace went out and had to be replaced at a cost of \$3552.00. Sounds like he got a cold welcome. However, it was the exact opposite. After much controversy between the previous pastor and some of the membership, Rev. Collum's maturity and administrative skills, as well as his solid Biblical teaching, were warmly welcomed.

Janie Lowman was our minister of music when Rev. Collum arrived and continued throughout his years here. They worked well together.

He recognized we had a very weak adult training union class, and willingly began preaching an evening sermon for the adults instead of having a class where we simply got together and read parts of the lesson.

Harold B. Dellinger, who had been a long time member and supporter of New Prospect before being called at mid-life into the ministry himself, was now retired and returned to our church. He and Rev. Collum were neighbors and both being ministers found much in common and became co-laborers for the Lord. Harold served as chairman of the Deacons in 1991. That same year our pastor suffered massive heart problems resulting in heart surgery. Harold filled the





pulpit many times while Arthur was recovering. That same year our giving to missions was the largest it has ever been. Out of a total receipts of \$80,713.00, we gave \$14,262.00 to the various mission programs we support

We did not experience numerical growth during Rev. Collum's years with us, but we did grow in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

By 1993, Rev. Collum had decided that due to continuing health problems, he would retire, and so he left us as pastor but did not move his church membership. He and Dolly bought a small home in the Trinity Community near their sons and began living a more relaxed life. This allowed his health to improve, and in 1996, when we again needed an interim pastor, Arthur returned to the pulpit of New Prospect for 13 months. These were good months for the Collums and the church.

On October 12, 1997, we called our new pastor and Arthur and Dolly quietly went back into retirement. Two months later on December 15, 1997, God called his faithful servant home.

**April 4, 2004**

Today for our history moment, we want to look at how services were scheduled during the early days when one preacher served as many as five different churches located miles apart. Rev. W. T. Brown was one such preacher. He was our pastor in 1923 and 1924. While serving this church, he also ministered to four others. A copy of his printed schedule was found. Here's how it reads:

On the first week-end monthly he had services on Saturday at 8 P.M. at Webb's Chapel, Sunday at 11 A.M. at Shady Grove, and Sunday evening at 8 brought him back to Webb's Chapel.

The second week-end of every month found him at Mt. Zion for a Saturday afternoon service at 2:30 and a Sunday morning service at the 11 o'clock hour. On that Sunday evening he was in the pulpit of Bostic Baptist Church at 8.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> week-end, New Prospect members gathered on both Saturday and Sunday at the 11 o'clock hour. On Sunday he then journeyed on to Shady Grove for an afternoon service at 3, and still more traveling brought him to Mt. Zion for the night service at 8.

The fourth week-end monthly found him in Bostic for three services: Saturday and Sunday nights at 8 and Sunday morning at 11.



The schedule did not list any services for the four times a year there are fifth week-ends.

Notice that on the week-end he preached for us, he had three Sunday services in three different churches.

April 11, 2004

In response to letters sent to all living former staff members for whom we could locate addresses, we have had some informative replies. Today for our history moment we want to share with you the letter from Billy G. Washburn who ministered in the New Prospect Church and community from July 1, 1964 through June 30, 1967. The Washburn family consisted of Rev. Washburn, his wife Sue, and their four sons: Barry, Bruce, Brent, and Bill.

Rev. Washburn says: "There were many persons in New Prospect for whom we have fond memories. In general the members exhibited, in their actions, a love for God and each other. To begin trying to name some we would not know where to stop. We will mention John Cline who proved to be a good substitute Grandfather for our boys.

Coming to New Prospect as a "rookie pastor," I still had a lot to learn, not only concerning church administration and pastoral work, but maybe more importantly, how to deal with the many and varied issues that arise in working with people. One person I found to be helpful in this respect was Marvin Fortenberry. I found his advice to be very wise. Though I didn't always follow it, in hind sight it probably would have been better, both for me and the church, if I had.

No major building projects were carried out while we were there. Under the leadership of Paul Hord and the help of Wray Wright and others, we did install temporary walls in the basement in order to create more Sunday School classrooms.

I remember no real problems concerning the financial state of the church. We were able to do whatever the membership was committed to do.

It would be difficult for me to evaluate the success or failure of our three years at New Prospect. That is something that only God and the members of the church at that time could do. I trust that God used my family and me in some ways to be a blessing to the church and its people."



**April 18, 2004**

**Our history moment today allows us to take a look at the salaries that have been paid to our pastors over our 150 years.**

**Up until his final year as our pastor, Rev. Thomas Dixon was not paid a specific salary, just whatever could be collected and often it was produce from members' gardens or a chicken and eggs from a farm. In 1908 he was paid \$100. The next year, our new preacher received \$200. Then the preacher's pay dropped to \$150. the next year. Another drop in 1911 to \$125, and there it stayed for six years. By 1933, we were paying \$250. annually for a preacher. During the last half of the 1930's our annual pay for a preacher was \$400. That dropped back to \$300. in 1941, but by 1949, the pay had climbed to \$500. In 1951 we paid our last part-time preacher \$800.**

**Until this point all our preachers had pastored several churches, and each church would schedule their services on different week-ends. Early on, we only had services on the third Saturday and Sunday of each month. When Rev. Kiser resigned on December 14, 1952, he was preaching here on the first, third, and fifth Sundays.**

**Our first full time minister was hired at \$1500. And his salary increased by \$500. each of his three years with us. In the mid 1950's our pastor's salary was \$3120.**

**Strange as it may sound, the same preacher was with us from 1964 through 1967, and we brought him in at a salary of \$4420. dropped to \$3630 his second year, and raised it to \$5080 his last year. I found no explanation for this fluctuation in the same man's earnings.**

**The minister called in 1967 was offered \$5200. for his services. That's a hundred dollars a week and was considered pretty good for the time period. By 1969, he was paid \$6180.**

**Fourteen years later a pastor serving New Prospect Church would be paid \$15,375. annually.**

**As inflation caused prices in general to rise rapidly during the last twenty years, so did the figure of our pastor's salary. It is now more than double what it was in 1983, and nine times the salary of the early 1960's. However, the question is: "Does New Prospect provide a living support for its pastors?" That's what Rev. I. D. Harrill requested of the churches of the Kings Mountain Association in 1913. Let's always seek to do at least that.**





**April 25, 2004**

**For our history moment today, we want to look at who has led the singing at New Prospect over our 150 years.**

**During the ministry of Thomas Dixon, it was told that he would begin singing a familiar hymn as he got off his horse. Continuing the song as he approached the church house, he would be heard by the assembled congregation, and they would join in the singing as he came into the house of worship. Therefore, we could say that he was the first song leader as well as the first preacher for New Prospect.**

**The first person listed on the statistics of the minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association as a choir director for New Prospect was Miss Ann Carpenter in the year 1944. The following year Willie Wright began a five year period of directing the choir. In 1950 Ann Carpenter served as choir leader again. Willie resumed the work for 1951. LaRue Poston directed our music in 1952 and 1953. Then during the next five years the job was rotated between J.L. Allen and Mrs. Clayton Absher.**

**In 1958 we employed Jack Gantt, our first paid Minister of Music. He remained in that position until September 1, 1960 when he resigned.**

**Buddy Lee was shown as the next music director, but he must have been with us for only a brief period of time because Lloyd Greene was employed in 1961. Remaining with us four years, Lloyd and his wife Glenda worked well with our membership as well as the choir.**

**Following Lloyd, in 1966 Dennis Hord served as our Choir Director. Then we called Harold Beam as Minister of Music in 1967. Harold brought his wife Sissy and young son Scott to our membership. They were easy to get to know and love, and their love for God was evident in their work. Harold continued with our music program until 1972 when he resigned to answer God's call into the preaching ministry.**

**We called Doris Funk to direct our music in 1973. She was with us two years and resigned due to health problems.**

**During the next seven years we had five different persons directing our music: Steve Elmore in 1975; Mildred Sigmon in 1976 & 77; Rick Tucker in 1978 (maybe you remember some of his duets with his wife Lisa as she accompanied him on the piano); Lynn Hamrick in 1980 & 81; and Pat St. Charles in 1982. Four of these five were Gardner Webb students, and we knew when they were employed that their tenure with us would not be long. Lynn Hamrick's service in our church was excellent, and keeping her was our desire. However, she was at a point in her own life (you know after college and before**



marriage) when she saw a once in a life time opportunity (to sing and travel and get paid for it) that she just couldn't pass up.

During the next year or so church member Amanda Cline lead our music. It probably needs to be added that Amanda often filled in between paid staff members and during illnesses and vacations for quite a few of our music directors.

On July 22, 1984 Janie Lowman was called as Minister of Music. Along with Janie came husband Bob, daughters Angie and Sandy and young son Davy. Janie and her daughters often sang specials for our worship services with Angie accompanying them on the piano. During her 16 years with us, Janie worked with four different pastors. She resigned on August 27, 2000.

Our pianist, Doris Funk, filled in as music director from the time Janie left until January 14, 2001 when Amy Tapp became our Minister of Music and beautifully works with all of us to add a musical dimension to each service of worship.

May 2, 2004

Our history moment today recognizes the ladies who have served God by using their musical talents at the piano or organ here at New Prospect. For many years this was a volunteer position with it becoming a paid position only since the mid 1990's. However, whether they received pay or not, their fingers on the keyboards enhanced the musical program of our church.

Records showing a pianist were first dated 1945. In that year Nell Hord was playing the piano, and she continued through 1950. Then Ruth Sperling and Ruth Allen played one year each. Next to be on the piano bench were the Fortenberry girls: Frances from 1953 through 1957, and Carolyn for the remainder of the '50's.

It is interesting to note that New Prospect did not have an organ when your researcher became a member of this church in 1964. However, our printed officers' list from the Rev. Bishop years, 1956 through 1962, show a pianist as well as an organist. Mrs. J. S. Cline, Mrs. Paul Hord, and Carolyn Fortenberry were named as organist on those lists.

Geneve Hord, Ruth Allen, Kathy Wright, Ann Allen and Jane Sperling were all pianist during the decade of the 60's.



**In 1967, an organ was donated to the church by the Beam family. At first we had no member who knew how to play it, but Jane Sperling quickly learned and moved from the piano to the organ. Her younger sister Nancy played the piano for a while. It wasn't long until the Sperling girls were graduating from high school and moving on to college leaving New Prospect needing someone with keyboard skills.**

**Mary Davis had joined our church by then. During one service, as he announced the page number for our hymn, Harold Beam asked if there was anyone in the congregation who could play the piano. Mary responded that she could, and she did that day. Soon she was elected organist, and Anita Poston became our pianist in the mid 1970's. Mary continued playing the organ until 1989. Nell Gales, Lisa Tucker, Wanda Greene and Angie Lowman occupied the piano bench during those years.**

**Wanda Greene became our third organist. Then after Angie moved away, we had no pianist for some time. Finally, we decided that our instrumentalists should be paid positions. So we elected a music committee and gave them the task of finding a pianist. Doris Funk, who 20 years earlier had served as our music director, was called back as pianist.**

**In 2001 Wanda felt the need to be free to visit her grown children without feeling she was neglecting the organist position. So she asked to be replaced. Mary Davis was asked to take the organist position again, and she did. Today we have three wonderfully talented ladies providing instrumental music for us. Doris on the piano. Mary on the organ. And Wanda who willingly fills in for either of them when they need to be away.**

**We are blessed indeed!**

**May 9.2004**

**Our history moment topic for today is Delegates or Messengers to the annual meeting of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association.**

**Delegates to the association must be elected by the member churches to attend and vote on issues brought before the association. The number of delegates a church can have is determined by its membership. With the association meetings often times during regular working hours, it isn't easy to get church members to agree to serve as delegates in today's world. Back when a big portion of our membership**





were farmers, we seemed to have had a larger number to represent our church at the annual association meetings.

Our pastor is routinely one of our delegates. Other surnames appearing over the years have been: Beam, Hoyle, Wilson, Ledford, Alexander, Elliott, Hamrick, Hord, Hendrick, Eskridge, Gillespie, Cline, Cornwell, Mauney, Parker, Allen, Champion, Webb, Smith, Furgerson, Turner, Dixon, Clark, Carpenter, Sperling, Wright, Fortenberry, Poston, Absher, Dellinger, Grigg, Beattie, McKinney, and Lowman.

Maybe you heard your own surname in our list. If so, you can assume that your ancestors served our church in this way.

May 16, 2004

Today's history moment topic is Church Clerks.

A church clerk is charged with the responsibility of recording minutes of church business sessions and keeping a current accurate membership roll as well as reporting annually to the association.

Beginning in the earliest years of New Prospect Baptist Church, J. C. Hoyle fulfilled those duties until 1893. L. W. Hoyle was clerk from 1894 to 1897. Then for nine years around the turn of the century, J. M. Gillespie kept our records. Beginning in 1908, O. C. Dixon served in that position for the next 24 years. In 1932 Miss Pearl Dixon was clerk, and Miss Margaret Hord assumed the clerk's duties from 1933 to 1941. Our records were in the hands of E. G. Clark in 1942 & 43, and Willie Wright did the job in 1944. In 1945, Paul Hord was elected clerk and continued as clerk until his death in 1990. His son Jerry Hord served as clerk from 1991 through 1996. Stephanie Rollins was clerk in 1997, Anne Koester in 1998, and Louise Gardner, our current clerk, has served since 1999.

Being church clerk is not an easy task, and we are grateful to all those who have done this work for us over the years.



**May 23, 2004**

**Today's history moment enables us to take a look at the membership of our church as far as numbers are concerned.**

**New Prospect Baptist Church was constituted in 1854 with 85 members, and within five years the membership had more than doubled. Over the next 20 years there were a few annual decreases in our enrollment, but mostly there were gradual increases until we reached a membership of 358 in the year 1878.**

**By then members who were traveling many miles by horse and buggy to attend the once a month week-end of worship were beginning to think about the need for houses of worship closer to their homes. The latter part of the 1800's saw the organization of several Baptist Churches in communities from which our members came.. Pleasant Grove, Lawndale, and Double Shoals were constituted, and some of their charter members were people who had transferred their letter from New Prospect to these newly formed congregations for purely practical reasons.**

**In the year 1900 our membership was 245, and in 1910 we had 199 members. Then along came the big war and people in general attended church better. Our membership increased during those years to a high of 274 in 1919. The post war years saw people once again drifting away from God, and church membership and attendance began to wane across the nation. New Prospect was no different. By the 1960's our membership was steadily around 200.**

**A housing development went up near our church in the mid 1960's, and we benefited from the influx of new people. Membership rose to 232.**

**Then once again it seemed societal changes affected our church rolls. More women joined the public work force, and new industries came on the scene. If you were willing to accept their rotating schedules, they offered better paying jobs. The Sunday blue laws were repealed opening up store jobs and shopping for a Sunday activity. Many young families sacrificed the quality of their family life for what looked like a higher standard of living. This meant that many children were not being taken to church by their parents on a regular basis, and church enrollment and attendance declined.**

**During the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our membership ranged between 180 and 213. It continues to do so today. We now have 197 members.**



**May 30, 2004**

**The Church Treasurer is the focus of our history moment today.**

**To be the treasurer of a church automatically means that you are trusted by the members of the congregation. It also requires a certain level of book-keeping skills as well as the ability to pay bills and salaries in a timely fashion and keep a watchful eye on the amount of money available so the church will not over-extend financially. The regular reporting to the membership of the receipts and expenditures is also a function of the treasurer.**

**O. C. Dixon was listed in the statistics of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association's minutes for the year 1926 as treasurer of New Prospect Baptist Church. Prior to that date there was no evidence that we had anyone elected to that position. Since then the treasurer's work has been done by the following members: Miss Novella Cline , Zeno Hord, Miss Vada Wright, Leander Hamrick, Paul Hord, Parham Beam, J. F. Poston, and Mills Cline.**

**Two of those treasurers are still actively with us, and we recognize them today for their many years of service to New Prospect. Parham Beam was treasurer for 1945 and then for a ten year period beginning in 1953. In 1963, Mills Cline accepted the treasurer's responsibilities, and now 40 years later, is still taking care of the church's money.**

**Thanks to both of you gentlemen.**

**June 6, 2004**

**The history moment today focuses our attention on those who have helped to keep our house of worship clean and comfortable.**

**There are no records to indicate a person was hired to clean the church building prior to 1952. Evidently, in the first 98 years of New Prospect Baptist Church's existence, members just worked together on this task. The custodian's salary, even today, is not great enough to make it a highly desired job. To assume the responsibility of cleaning a church, one would have to love the Lord, be humble, and deeply devoted to the on-going work of the Master.**

**Just who has done this work at New Prospect?**





In the deacon's minutes of September 9, 1952, they said, "Let the women of the WMS have first chance at the job of cleaning the church for the year and to pay them the \$240.00 that was set up in the budget for the job." There was no follow-up as to whether the ladies took the job or not. However, somewhere between that entry and 1960, Harold B. Dellinger was employed to clean the church. We draw that conclusion because on April 8, 1960 "the deacons recommended that Kenneth Wright be hired as sexton to replace Harold B. Dellinger who had resigned from the job effective immediately."

Kenneth must have remained in that position for 17 years because there was no further mention of custodial work until July 31, 1977. On that date, T. Z. Hord, house committee chairman, told the church that we were without a custodian and asked if anyone would like the job. He got no volunteer.

On August 11, 1977, Mr. & Mrs. Willie Wright were employed as custodians for the remainder of the year.

On October 15, 1978, Mrs. Robert Rollins became our church custodian. Now, a quarter of a century later she and husband Robert are still on the job taking care of the Lord's house on New Prospect hill.

Our gratitude goes to Darcus and Robert for the labor of love they do and to other church members who help with major cleaning during the Spring and Fall clean-up weeks.

June 13, 2004

Today we want to use our history moment to look at our Sunday School Department. Specifically naming superintendents and the enrollment over the years.

New Prospect Baptist Church was in its 30<sup>th</sup> year before we found any mention of Sunday School in any recorded information. That was in 1883, and Sidney Smith was the superintendent with an enrollment of 30.

Sunday School superintendent was again listed in the 1887 Kings Mountain Baptist Association minutes, and B. C. Parker was filling the position. The membership was still 30.

We must have had a hard time getting this department firmly organized and functioning during horse and buggy days because it did not appear in the statistics again until 1895. David Bookout was the leader and membership was 35.



Two years later, D. H. Elliott was superintendent. Membership had grown to 50 and then on to 67 under his guidance during the next several years.

At the turn of the century, we had a number of men who led the Sunday School for one year terms. They were: G. B. Humphries, J. S. Stroup, S. B. Jones, G. P. Webb, and D. P. Jones.

In 1905 we had a membership of 101, and it was noted that we had Sunday School nine months out of the year.

In 1911 J. B. Smith began a four year period of leading the Sunday School. Membership reached 108 with an average attendance of 48.

That brings us to 1915, and it seems the Sunday School program has secured a permanent place in our church. It is to this church department that we give the responsibility of outreach into the community and small group and age appropriate Bible study.

During the 89 years from 1915 to the present time, there have been 22 men serve as the Sunday School Department head. I will simply give you a roll call of their names and the number of years they served.

E. C. Carpenter 3, J. B. Smith 2, Horace Champion 1,  
O. C. Dixon 5, M. L. Turner 3, Zeno Hord 8,  
Leander Hamrick 2, E. G. Clark 7, J. L. Allen 9 John Cline 9,  
J. D. Clark 3, James Smith 1, Wray Wright 3, Gary Kester 2,  
Joel Greene 1, James Hord 8, Jerry Hord 1, Mike Deese 1,  
Warren Beaver 1, Howard McKinney 10, Clyde Sweezy 2, and  
James Camp 2.

Our membership in Sunday School reached its highest of 188 in 1958 when J. Edgar Bishop was pastor and J. D. Clark was Sunday School Superintendent. Our highest average attendance for a year was 103 in 1970 when James Adams was pastor and Gary Kester was Sunday School superintendent.

June 20, 2004

Baptist Training Union is our History Moment topic today. In the minutes of the church business session for August 8, 1954 it was noted that we began considering training union. Then recorded on September 12, 1954 the minutes indicated that the church decided to start having training union.



BTU was shown on the New Prospect annual report to the Kings Mountain Baptist Association for the first time in 1955. Martha Lee Clark was the director , enrollment was 65, and average attendance was 32.

BTU continued to be one of the church programs until 1987, but we must have been struggling to make it successful for some years before it was discontinued. From the deacon's minutes of September 9, 1970 we found this entry: "The deacons recommend that effective October 1, 1970, the new fiscal year, Sunday night preaching be discontinued and emphasis be placed on improving our training union. This was brought before the church and passed."

The meeting time for BTU was one hour before the Sunday evening worship service when it was begun, and as its name implies its purpose was to train church members in the disciplines of our faith. Bible drills were a big part of the BTU children's classes.

During the 32 years our church had a BTU, we had 15 members who served as director of the department. Their names and number of years of service are:

Martha Lee Clark 2, Josephine Beam 3, Delia Allen 3,  
Mrs. Clayton Absher 2, Wray Wright 1, Billy Washburn 1,  
Harold B. Dellinger 1, Warren Beaver 2, John Cline 2,  
Geneve Hord 4, Gary Kester 1, Bob Epley 3, J. B. Wright 1,  
Essie Hord 6, and Louise Lovelace 1.

BTU membership was highest in 1957 with 86 members, but by the mid 1960's we had seen a decline to only 49. The last year we had BTU there were only 33 enrolled. The ending of this department of our church was gradual. First only the adult class was replaced by an evening worship service. The children's training union classes continued. Over the years the children's training union study materials were replaced with more contemporary curriculum. Finally, our Sunday evening activities were no longer recognized as BTU at all.

June 27, 2004

The Women's Missionary Union is the umbrella organization under which we have the age-level organizations that engage our members in various aspects of mission work. That is our focus for today's history moment.





The adult organization of WMU has experienced many name changes over the years. They have been WMS Circles, Baptist Women's Groups, and now they are Women on Mission Options. The youngest children were first Sunbeams and later became Mission Friends. The G.A.'s were the Girls Auxiliary. They retained the same initials, but now they are the Girls in Action. In more recent years we have seen new co-ed groups called Children on Mission and Youth on Mission.

Whatever the name may be, the organization has to have a leader to see that the five tasks are carried out and to see that the WMU organizational work co-ordinates with the overall work of the church. That leader has been called President and now is called Director. Whatever her title may be she helps the church as a whole to pray for and give to missions, to do missions, to teach about missions, to develop a missions lifestyle, and to participate in the work of the church and the denomination.

Early attempts to organize a WMU program in New Prospect were made in the 1920's by Mrs. O. C. Dixon, in the 1930's by Mrs. Leander Hamrick, and in the 1940's by Mrs. Yates Sperling. However, it was LaRue Poston in the early 1950's who finally got WMU firmly established as a lasting part of New Prospect church life. Following after LaRue and building on the firm foundation of her work, we have had 17 other ladies take the reins of leadership for the WMU. We recognize them in roll-call fashion along with their years of service in this position:

Mrs. Clayton Absher in 1955, Lillian Cline in 1956,  
Mrs. J. Edgar Bishop from 1957 –1961,  
Frances Wright in 1962, 1969, 1970 & 1977, Delia Allen in 1963,  
Sue Washburn in 1964, Ruby Sperling in 1965,  
Shirley Hord in a total of 18 years scattered from 1966 to 2001,  
Gertha Saunders in 1968, Mary Davis in 1976,  
Mrs. T. Z. Hord in 1978 & 1979, Mary Deese in 1980,81, & 82,  
Holly Brock in 1983, Sherry Freeman in 1984,  
Louise Gardner in 1985, 1986, & 1994, Karen Smith in 1998,  
and Bonnie Blevins in 2002.

For this current year and occasionally in the past, WMU survives in New Prospect without an elected person in the leadership position. This has been possible through the joint effort of many ladies who have a heart for missions and simply step up to the plate and do whatever is necessary to keep the WMU program alive.



**July 4, 2004**

**Today we will look at the history of the Brotherhood program in New Prospect Baptist Church. This is the male missions organization, and our first records indicate Brotherhood began here in 1952. There were five meetings and 34 enrolled that year under the leadership of T. Z. Hord.**

**The Brotherhood is the parent organization under which is placed the Baptist Men for the adults and the R.A.'s for the school aged boys. The Brotherhood often cooperates with the WMU in church-wide mission emphasis.**

**From its beginning in 1952 until now, this organization has been led by 19 different men. They will be named in roll call style with their years of service in that position>**

**Clayton Absher in 1953, Paul Hord in 1954 & 1955,  
John Cline in 1957, 1974 & 2000, James Hord in 1958,  
Harold B. Dellinger in 1959, Wray Wright in 1960 & 1963,  
T. Z. Hord in 1961 & 1962, J. L. Allen in 1964 & 1966,  
Charles Ledbetter in 1967 & 1968, Gary Kester in 1969 & 1970,  
Herman Willis in 1973, Warren Beaver in 1975 & 1978,  
Jerry Freeman in 1981 & 1982, Willie Wright in 1983 & 1984,  
Bob Lowman from 1985 through 1995,  
Lonnie Fain in 1996 & 1997, Danny York in 1998,  
Clyde Sweezy in 1999, and Tim Barrett in 2002 & 2003.**

**July 11, 2004**

**The history moment today is dedicated to the men who have served our church as chairmen of the Board of Deacons over the years.**

**We have on file the minutes of the deacon's meetings beginning in 1950 to the present time. Also beginning in the 1950 Kings Mountain Baptist Association minutes, the deacon chairman from each member church was listed. Prior to 1950, I found only one written record of our church having deacons. This was a hand written report prepared by New Prospect Baptist Church historian, Geneve Hord at the request of the Memorial Day program committee. She used information gathered by Rev. E. S. Elliott from various sources and presented it as a part of the Memorial Day Service on May 17, 1959. Among other historical information about New Prospect, the report included a paragraph that**



listed former deacons in the chronological order in which they had been elected. To that date there had been six groups of deacons. The first and third groups had only four names. The second and fourth groups had five names. The fifth group had seven names and the sixth group contained nine names. In that report there was no one named as chairman of either of the groups. Neither was there any mention of the frequency of election or length of terms.

From the deacon minutes dated November 8, 1950, we found they voted to begin rotating deacons on a three year term allowing the newly elected deacons to serve the full term and those already on the board to draw lots for their remaining length of time on the board. That item also stated T. Z. Hord was chairman and E. G. Clark was secretary.

The deacons serve along with the pastor to oversee the work of the church. They annually elect their own chairman and any other officers they need. The chairman then conducts their monthly meetings, and if the pastor desires, he also moderates our church's monthly business sessions.

The following men have served in this capacity and their number of years serving as chairman of the deacon board is also given.

Zeno Hord 3, J. L. Allen 8, Parham Beam 7,  
Paul Allen 4, J. D. Clark 1, John Cline 3,  
M. A. Fortenberry 1, Wray Wright 2, Joel Greene 1,  
Herman Willis 1, Warren Beaver 8, James Hord 1,  
Jerry Freeman 1, Paul Hord 1, Glenn Sperling 1,  
Harold B. Dellinger 2, Tim Barrett 1, Todd Hammond 1,  
and James Camp 1.

July 18, 2004

Today's history moment high-lights the "Youth Sundays" that were a part of the annual observances of New Prospect Baptist Church in the 1950's and early 1960's.

In those days, children were brought to church regularly by their parents from the time they were tiny babies. So by the time they reached their teen years, they knew well what was required of every officer in the church.

On a pre-arranged Sunday, usually in the early Spring, the youth literally took over the operation of the church for the day. They would have been assigned their responsibilities well in advance and would have





met with the adult who normally filled the office they were assigned to cover for the day. On the Sunday before Youth Sunday, the youth went to their assigned places and watched and listened as the adult did their task.

Their assignments were across the board of church duties – from teaching one of the Sunday School classes – to counting the offering – to leading the music – to preaching the sermon. On that special Sunday, the youth did it all, and the adults beamed with a modest pride as they observed the young people who had learned so well what God's work involved. They had the feeling that the future of the church was in very capable hands.

The majority of the information for this moment in history is pulled from the memories of your researcher. These Youth Sundays were very impressive to me as I joined this church in 1964, and saw the youth of that time period do such an excellent job at their assigned task. The only written record I found of those special youth days was a partial list of the youth leaders for 1959. It included pastor- Dennis Willis, Sunday School Superintendent – Larry Poston, Training Union Director – J. D. Clark, Jr., WMU President – Kathy Kester, Brotherhood President – Richard Hord, and Deacon Chairman – Eddie Allen.

July 25, 2004

This information was found in the minutes of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association for 1953. It was a part of a report given to the Association in its annual meeting by Carlos L. Young.

He said, "Many town folks and some people in the county are wondering what we mean by the Lord's Acre. It is a plan adopted by all who will in a church to set aside an acre and all that is made from that acre will be given through the Church to the Lord's work. It is not confined to an acre of ground, but some have raised livestock, some chickens, some the eggs gathered on Sundays, and some the milk given on Sundays, and some have set aside their wages for the first hour of work each week. It is very flexible – adaptable to each church and each individual of the church.

The next question is: What is the money used for? It has been used to build churches, remodel old ones, help pay off indebtedness, and build pastors' homes.



**The next question is: What are the benefits? It makes stronger Christian families. It teaches that the Lords' work can become a part of your daily work. It teaches a practical lesson in stewardship responsibility. The Lord's Acre should be used as a means of teaching regular, constant stewardship and not primarily as a money raising effort."**

**In response to the question, "Who started this and what churches were participating?" Mr. Young gave credit to Pastor C. C. Crow of Bethany Baptist Church. New Prospect was listed along with 12 other churches as those who were involved in the Lord's Acre Project.**

**Several documents were found in our files that relate to this stewardship effort. There were handwritten minutes of the Lord's Acre committee meetings which were held in member's homes. Each year the committee would decide on how the money raised would be used. the purchase of a new piano, beautifying the church grounds by placing shrubbery around the church, purchasing chairs for the basement, and the really big project that was on-going for several years – building the parsonage.**

**The harvest sale was evidently a cross between a modern day flea market and an auction. At the designated time and place, each person brought forth what had been produced. If I close my eyes, I can almost hear the chatter as church members survey the bounty that has been brought in. "OINK! Watch out! There's that fat hog that Bruce and Betty Hord raised. Do you hear the clucking of those 50 chickens that Shirley and Larry Poston raised from little dibs? Oh, look over there at that lovely needlepoint piece that one of the ladies made. All these things ought to bring good prices."**

**Finally everything was sold and then soon after that the church would have a special service to bring the money earned from their Lord's Acre project to the church treasury.**

**The ingathering of the Lord's Acre harvest was a special time in the life of the church each year. Rev. Willingham deemed it important enough that he sent a letter reminding each family of the November 25, 1962 ingathering. He stated that 25% of the harvest offering would go to missions and 75% would be used to improve the church's heating system that year.**

**The budget for the 1961-62 church year was foot-noted with the Lord's Acre figures from the six previous years: 1956 - \$3,209.15, 1957 - \$2809.17, 1958 - \$2,066.16, 1959 - \$1,200.00, 1960 - \$1,722.74, and 1961 - \$1,598.26.**



For a time period before inflation had become so common, those figures sound like there was pretty good harvesting of the Lord's Acres here at New Prospect.

**August 1, 2004**

Today we are looking at bits and pieces of information gleaned from minutes that are of interest, but did not fit into any one of the broader categories we have focused on for our history moments.

April 8, 1956...decided to have a church council consisting of the heads of each organization. On that same date we decided to take part in the School of Missions that was being planned for 1958 and to have a ten-day revival beginning July 3, 1956.

July 8, 1956...It was announced that the WMU was to have charge of the services for the first Sunday in August.

January 12, 1958...We voted to organize a Boy Scout troop.

April 23, 1963...We observed World Mission Week.

April 18, 1968...The deacons recommended that Harold B. Dellinger be licensed to preach.

March 6, 1970...The church was financially supporting a softball team.

February 10, 1977...Due to fuel shortages, Sunday night services were cancelled until the first of April.

July 11, 1982...The church approved the purchase of a van for church use, and a \$6,000.00 figure was authorized for its purchase.

**August 8, 2004**

For our history moment today we focus our attention on the building of the educational wing and its dedication.

Although there must have been much ado about the building of such an addition to an existing structure as the membership of New Prospect did in the late 1940's under the guidance of Rev. A. M. Kiser, there were only six brief comments in the minutes of our church relating to this project. I share those with you now:

November, 1947 began talking about adding a Sunday School Part.

December, 1947 Building committee given the go ahead.





**July, 1948** Building committee announced that work on the Sunday School part would begin next week.

**July 6, 1953** voted to have concrete picnic tables erected.

**July 13, 1956** Mr. Charlie Weathers of Weathers Concrete was engaged to build picnic tables. He requested that his name be put on each end of the tables and offered a six foot bench free of charge if the church would give him permission.

**August 2, 1953** Held dedication service for the new Sunday School facilities.

The Shelby Daily Star used to have community reporters who would write the news of their community to be published in the Star on a regular basis. Geneve Hord was New Prospect Baptist Church's historian for many years and provided the New Prospect news to the newspaper. Her column of July 29, 1953 contained the following: "Dedication Services for the New Prospect Baptist Church will be held Sunday. The program will begin at 10 o'clock. The Rev. A. M. Kiser of Fork, NC, former pastor of this church, will give the building history of the new addition. Special music will be furnished by the church choir. Mrs. Addie Dixon Thacker, daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Dixon who served as pastor of the church for over 50 years, will lead in prayer. Lee B. Weathers of Shelby will introduce the Honorable Frank Dixon, former Governor of Alabama, who will give the address. The pastor, Rev. L. W. Smith will deliver the dedication sermon.

Dinner will be served on the new concrete picnic tables that have been arranged on the church grounds at the noon hour."

Of course, the addition referenced in this article was the three story educational building and the vestibule that were added to the one room structure that had been New Prospect Baptist Church since 1892 when the original frame structure had been bricked.

**August 15, 2004**

Today we look at the items in either the church clerk's or the deacon's minutes that are about the building of the parsonage.

The entry for November 12, 1954 states, "It was discussed and a talk was carried on as to how the church would go about planning and preparing for a parsonage.



On December 9, 1954 we see that a building fund had earlier been established to accumulate money to build a parsonage, and, now, on this date, a motion was made that the money be put in the building and loan so it would accumulate some interest until we were ready to build.

The entry for September 9, 1956 says, We began looking for a suitable site to build a parsonage.”

In October of 1956 a special conference was called, and the church voted to buy a lot for the parsonage from Josh Beam and also accept, as a gift, a parcel of adjoining land from member Harold B. Dellinger.

The church approved the parsonage floor plans on January 13, 1957 and made plans to begin the building in July.

The entry for June of 1957 said, “The building committee was authorized to borrow \$10,000.00 from the building and loan at 6% interest and repay it at \$100.00 per month so the parsonage can be built now.

The entry in the minutes dated July 14, 1957 simply said, “Construction was started on the parsonage.”

Evidently the building process went smoothly because there was no further mention of the work of building a parsonage until December 1, 1957. On that date it stated that “open house was observed at the new parsonage.”

The Deacons recommended on December 5, 1957, “that the building committee be relieved since the parsonage is completed, and its care be turned over to the trustees. Also they recommended that any money left in the building fund account be turned over to the general treasury.”

The \$100.00 monthly payment evidently was paid from the general treasury and would continue until the loan was repaid which was in early spring of 1962.

August 22, 2004

For today’s history moment we share with you an article published in the Shelby Daily Star in March of 1962.

There is a picture of five men and two women standing around an altar table and the caption says, “NOTE BURNING CEREMONY Last Sunday New Prospect Baptist Church held special services, a part of which was burning the note on the church parsonage. Participating in



the service were Paul Allen, chairman of the building committee, T. Z. Hord, the Rev. W. G. Camp, former pastor, E. G. Clark, the Rev. J. Edgar Bishop, pastor, Mrs. Parham Beam, and Mrs. J. S. Cline.”

The article was head lined DEDICATION HELD FOR NEW PROSPECT PASTOR’S HOME, and I am simply quoting the article.

“The people of New Prospect Baptist Church observed a dedication service last Sunday, dedicating to the Lord’s service the new parsonage. The Rev. W. Gaston Camp, retired minister who is a former pastor of the church, brought the dedicatory message. At the close of the service, the building committee gathered at the church altar and burned a \$10,000.00 note signifying freedom of the parsonage from debt.

The men of this rural community went to their own farms and cut the timber, used their own trucks, tractors, labor, and even their own sawmill to cut the lumber for this building. An estimated \$3,000.00 worth of labor and materials were donated. The building was finished at a total cost of \$18,000.00. Funds for the building program for many years have come through the Lord’s Acre program. Funds from the program for 1962 will go 25% for missions and 75% for the building program for the future.

Revival services are in progress at the church this week with messages by the Rev. A. M. Kiser, former pastor. Services begin daily at 7:30 PM.”

August 29, 2004

Today for our history moment we are looking at things we have done over the years to enhance the church property. All of this information was gleaned from church minutes.

January 28, 1951. The deacons recommended that the church buy pews for the sanctuary. They wanted to have a center aisle and an aisle on each side with two sections of pews. The pews were to cost \$96. each. A committee was appointed to canvas the community for contributions. Mrs. Paul Allen, Mrs. Paul Hord, Mrs. Wallace Early, P. C. Beattie, and Mrs. Yates Sperling later turned in collected money amounting to \$2,823.05 and additional pledges of \$438.00.

In September of 1964 we voted to install a telephone in the pastor’s study at a cost of \$4.40 monthly plus installation fees.





In 1966, New Prospect voted to remodel the sanctuary, carpet the floor and install air conditioning in the sanctuary.

In 1978 we had cushions made for the pews in February, and in April we had the Sunday School Department air-conditioned.

In March of 1981 the church and parsonage were tied on to the new Upper Cleveland water system while the initial hook-up fee was only \$50.00.

In November of 1981 we began to see the need for protective coverings to be placed over the stained glass windows in the sanctuary and proceeded to get estimates, church approval and the job done.

In 1983 we added the steeple to our church building.

On January 11, 1987 the church approved the installation of a new Trane Furnace at a cost of \$3552.00.

In May, 1990, landscaping with several trees, shrubbery, and two azalea beds were added to enhance the exterior beauty of our church. Also, later that year we purchased 21 additional acres of land that lies between the church building and the parsonage.

In 1998, the nursery was renovated and decorated with monies donated in memory of Rev. Arthur Collum and Mrs. Lala Yarboro. A plaque was placed at the entrance of the nursery in recognition of these memorials.

While the parsonage was empty in late 2000, we did some major repairs and painted the house to have it in good shape for our next pastor

September 5, 2004

Our history moment topic for today is our interim pastors who helped us in our times of greatest need, but first let's look at some interesting facts and dates.

After ten years as our pastor, Rev. A. M. Kiser resigned on December 28, 1952. Thirteen days later, Rev. L. W. Smith was called to pastor New Prospect.

Rev. Smith resigned effective January 31, 1956. Five weeks later, Rev. J. Edgar Bishop was called to shepherd the New Prospect flock.

Rev. Bishop resigned on May 13, 1962. Thirteen weeks later, Rev. W. W. Willingham was called to pastor the New Prospect Baptist Church.



It appears that preachers were plentiful and hardly any time lapsed between one pastor and the next. Prior to the late 1960's we simply needed someone to supply a few weeks between pastors. It wasn't long enough to get attached to the interim pastor. That did change.

The first interim to make a lasting impact on New Prospect was probably Rev. C. C. Crow. Not only did he fulfill the duties of pastor as we sought a new man for our pulpit in 1967, he also was instrumental in getting Harold Beam to come to New Prospect as music director.

Later, at times when our church had experienced some degree of division, it seems God always provided us with a minister with years of experience and wisdom to help put us back on the right track.

Rev. C. O. Greene was such a man. He was with us in 1982. He had ministered in several area churches in his younger years, and then was the Kings Mountain Baptist Association Director of Missions before retiring. He came out of his comfortable retirement to be God's example among us for an interim period.

In 1986, we again found ourselves without a shepherd. Another retired minister came to our rescue. Rev. J. C. Goare and his pianist wife Sarah were with us for about eight months and were much loved by the membership.

Dr. Gene Watterson entered into a Covenant Agreement with New Prospect Baptist Church on September 9, 1999 to serve as Intentional Interim pastor to lead us through the healing process following a period of division within our congregation. The resignation of our former pastor, Rev. Larry Nance, following the hearing of the report from the consultant from the Center for Congregational Health on June 27, 1999 had left us a pastorless church in need of a shepherd with lots of experience. Dr. Watterson, who had pastored First Baptist of Shelby for over 25 years and had also served as president of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention for two terms filled that need. During his year and three months with us, he caused us to look at ourselves, our long history, where we were at the present time, and where we hoped to be spiritually at some point in the future. He then helped us get our focus back on God. During this time also, we lost some members, and he helped us realize that was a necessary part of the healing, not to dwell on the loss, but to look to the future and a time when those that remain faithful members of God's Church here at New Prospect will worship God in unity in a manner pleasing unto God.



**It could probably be said of these interim periods that these were the worst of times. However, because of the guidance of these mature men of God they turned out to be the best of times. And we are grateful.**

**September 12, 2004**

**There are some things in life that if you have been fortunate enough to have experienced, you will never forget. Many things that have happened through the years at New Prospect fall into that category. We want you to relax and let these wonderful memories fill your minds as they are mentioned in our history moment today.**

**If you were here during the building of the parsonage, I bet you will not forget Ada Beam and others leading the effort to make draperies with beautiful valances for the pastor's home. We also will never forget her faithfulness to the church when years and arthritis had taken their toil, and she made her way with her walker down the center aisle to her seat every Sunday.**

**We will never forget the many children who grew up in New Prospect in the 1950's and 1960's. They filled the classrooms of our Sunday School and made Vacation Bible School a joyful experience.**

**If you were a member of one of the three classes that occupied the basement in the 1960's, I'm sure you will not forget the three make shift Sunday School classrooms formed with the collapsible walls that could be taken down when we needed the fellowship hall. You remember, I'm sure, trying to decide which teacher to listen to on any given Sunday because you could easily hear them all.**

**If you were a part of the Fidelis Sunday School Class you will never forget the wonderful example set by Lillian Cline. And I bet Lillian will not forget how the ladies of the Fidelis class showed her their appreciation with a "This is Your Life" type party for her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and presented her a handmade quilt on which each class member had embroidered a block.**

**Those of you in your advancing years will not forget the wonderful Senior Citizens Banquets that were hosted by the Fidelis class in your honor for 30 years.**

**Those of you who were here in the 1970's will always remember how we worked to spruce up our classrooms in an effort to make God's house as nice as possible.**





Those who like music will not forget the annual Christmas caroling to our shut-ins. Regardless of whether you sang or were sung to, the experience is a vivid memory.

We remember fondly Willa Shields, her son Don and his wife who invited the church to their Moss Lake home each summer for a picnic.

We will not forget the women whose names were given to Sunday School classes and a WMU group. The devotion of Ida Allen, Hester Cline and Essie Hord to God and His work here at New Prospect was an example to all who knew them.

We will not forget the precious memories of the ladies behind the men who filled our pulpit. Vera Kiser, Gracie Bishop, Sue Washburn, Martha Adams, Nell Gales, Jeanna Stutts, Dolly Collum, Darla Harvey, quickly come to my mind. Perhaps you can recall even more.

Musically, I will not forget the duets sung by Rick Tucker and his pianist wife, Lisa or the beautiful music of Janie Lowman and her daughters, or the heart-feeling in the songs presented by Martha Adams when she sang for funerals.

This list could go on forever, but I must stop. I hope these thoughts have caused you to think about things you hold special about New Prospect.

September 19, 2004

One hundred and five years ago this week, our church hosted the Kings Mountain Baptist Association annual meeting for the third time in our fifty year history. From the minutes of the 48<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Kings Mountain Baptist Association held with the New Prospect Baptist Church on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>, 1899, I give you these quotes and general information.

“State of North Carolina, Cleveland County, September 21, 1899.

The Kings Mountain Baptist Association met this day in its 48<sup>th</sup> annual session with the Baptist Church at New Prospect. At ten o'clock AM, Rev. G. M. Webb preached the annual introductory sermon with much zeal. His text was Isaiah 43:10, and his topic was “Ye Are My Witnesses.” The body then adjourned one hour for refreshments.”

New Prospect's delegates were: D. O. Alexander, J. F. Cline, D. H. Elliott, R. L. Allen, J. M. Gillespie, and D. G. Mauney.



**Rev. T. Dixon, who was pastor of New Prospect as well as Carpenter's Grove Church, was elected as a delegate to the Southern Baptist Convention scheduled to meet in Hot Springs, Arkansas on May 11, 1900.**

**New Prospect pledged \$8.00 for state missions, \$3.00 for Baptist orphanages, \$5.00 for foreign missions, \$2.00 for education, and \$5.00 for home and Indian missions for a total of \$23.00. Total pledges from all thirty-three churches for all the various offerings amounted to \$351.23.**

**Rev. A. C. Irvin offered the following resolution, and it was unanimously adopted:**

**"Resolved: That the Kings Mountain Association return many thanks to the New Prospect Church and community for the exceedingly hospitable way in which they have entertained this body during its session."**

**It should be noted that New Prospect would host the association twice more before its membership got so big that our facilities were not large enough to accommodate the meeting. We last were host in 1955.**

**September 26, 2004**

**Today is our last Sunday before our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. So this is our last of the 52 history moments that we have been privileged to share with you. We felt today's focus should be on fairly recent bits of historically significant information about our church.**

**New Prospect Baptist Church entered into a Trust Agreement with North Carolina Baptist Foundation on April 1, 1998 for the foundation to manage our Cemetery Fund. The amount of \$53,000.00 was the initial deposit, and it was agreed it could grow up to \$75,000.00. We will receive back from the interest of the trust account annually 4 % to be used for grounds maintenance.**

**New Prospect Baptist Church became an heir to a portion of the estate of the late Vera Yarbrough Washburn. Mrs. Washburn grew up in this church community and after marriage moved her membership to Double Springs Baptist Church where her husband was a member. They had no children. Mr. Washburn preceded her in death. In her waning years she had placed much of her estate in a trust and named the two churches as joint beneficiaries.. Soon after her passing, our**



church trustees received \$250,000.00, and were told there would be more as soon as the estate was settled. The money we received was placed in an interest bearing account with First National Bank. However, Mrs. Washburn's will and trust were contested by her neice and nephews.

In the late fall of 2002, we decided to use some of the Washburn money that was in our possession to do some major renovations in the sanctuary and educational building. Church Interiors was hired to do the work at a cost of \$151,567.10.

February 9, 2003.. Due to a danger that a decaying tree might fall on the church building, it was decided to have three large oaks removed from the church grounds and the remaining trees be trimmed at a cost of \$8,000.00.

On that same date, we decided that since we had been blessed with the Washburn inheritance, it should be tithed. Therefore, \$25,000.00 was designated to be distributed among mission agencies that we support.

April 13, 2003 we agreed to have the church building's roof covered with 30 year shingles, to pour a 12 foot concrete drive way at the parsonage, and to install a sound system in the sanctuary.

July 13, 2003 We voted to begin "Children's Church" for children three years of age through second grade. This began with the new church year on the first Sunday of September. Amy Lail directs this new program and is assisted by Becky Wright..

August 10, 2003 We approved plans to add a new part-time youth director to our staff. A job description and a salary of \$5970.00 annually were approved. The personnel committee was authorized to advertise the position and interview applicants. In March of 2004, Rev. James Lybrand was hired for this position.

In August, 2003 a video camera was installed in the sanctuary and wired to a VCR and TV monitor in the nursery. This enables our nursery workers to watch the little ones and still get to see and hear the worship services. Recording the services also makes it possible to take copies of the tapes to our shut-ins. This is a project that the morning Women on Missions group has assumed.

On April 18, 2004, it was announced by our trustees and pastor that the courts had made the final distributions from the Vera Yarbrough Washburn estate. In addition to the \$250,000.00 received earlier, New Prospect Baptist Church was heir to \$157,000.00 more in cash plus 6,754 shares of B. B. & T. stock which has a current value of





**\$34.00 per share making the total stock value \$229,636.00 and the grand total of her gift to New Prospect \$636,636.00. Through the generosity of Mrs. Washburn in bequeathing such a significant gift to the church of her childhood, New Prospect has been financially blessed. The only things Mrs. Washburn requested of the church was that a prayer garden be established somewhere on the grounds and that her parent's (John R. and Candus Smith Yarbrough) graves which are in our cemetery be decorated with a floral bouquet each Memorial Day. We must certainly do that and more.**

**It is the prayer of the current membership that God will bless us with wisdom to use this inheritance in ways that will glorify Him and enhance the unity of His people who worship on New Prospect Hill now and in the future.**

